

Notice of Allowability	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	10/822,651	IWASAKA ET AL.	
	Examiner John P. Leubecker	Art Unit 3739	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address--

All claims being allowable, PROSECUTION ON THE MERITS IS (OR REMAINS) CLOSED in this application. If not included herewith (or previously mailed), a Notice of Allowance (PTOL-85) or other appropriate communication will be mailed in due course. **THIS NOTICE OF ALLOWABILITY IS NOT A GRANT OF PATENT RIGHTS.** This application is subject to withdrawal from issue at the initiative of the Office or upon petition by the applicant. See 37 CFR 1.313 and MPEP 1308.

1. This communication is responsive to August 11, 2006.
2. The allowed claim(s) is/are 17,19-27 and 29-43.
3. Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 - a) All
 - b) Some*
 - c) None
 of the:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. 09/848,301.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this national stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* Certified copies not received: _____.

Applicant has THREE MONTHS FROM THE "MAILING DATE" of this communication to file a reply complying with the requirements noted below. Failure to timely comply will result in ABANDONMENT of this application.
THIS THREE-MONTH PERIOD IS NOT EXTENDABLE.

4. A SUBSTITUTE OATH OR DECLARATION must be submitted. Note the attached EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT or NOTICE OF INFORMAL PATENT APPLICATION (PTO-152) which gives reason(s) why the oath or declaration is deficient.
5. CORRECTED DRAWINGS (as "replacement sheets") must be submitted.
 - (a) including changes required by the Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) attached
 - 1) hereto or 2) to Paper No./Mail Date _____.
 - (b) including changes required by the attached Examiner's Amendment / Comment or in the Office action of Paper No./Mail Date _____.

Identifying indicia such as the application number (see 37 CFR 1.84(c)) should be written on the drawings in the front (not the back) of each sheet. Replacement sheet(s) should be labeled as such in the header according to 37 CFR 1.121(d).
6. DEPOSIT OF and/or INFORMATION about the deposit of BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL must be submitted. Note the attached Examiner's comment regarding REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEPOSIT OF BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL.

Attachment(s)

1. Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2. Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3. Information Disclosure Statements (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08),
Paper No./Mail Date _____
4. Examiner's Comment Regarding Requirement for Deposit
of Biological Material
5. Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
6. Interview Summary (PTO-413),
Paper No./Mail Date _____.
7. Examiner's Amendment/Comment
8. Examiner's Statement of Reasons for Allowance
9. Other _____.

EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT

1. An extension of time under 37 CFR 1.136(a) is required in order to make an examiner's amendment which places this application in condition for allowance. During a telephone conversation conducted on August 22, 2006, William Lyddane requested an extension of time for One MONTH(S) and authorized the Director to charge Deposit Account No. 19-0089 the required fee of \$120.00 for this extension and authorized the following examiner's amendment. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it MUST be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

The application has been amended as follows:

IN THE CLAIMS

In claim 31, line 2, replace "two" with –three--.

In claim 41, line 1, replace second occurrence of "the" (last word in line 1) with –an--.

REASONS FOR ALLOWANCE

2. The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance: Claim 17 has been amended to recite that within the thickness-varying region the thickness of the layer varies in its longitudinal direction in a stepwise manner including multiple steps. As pointed out by Applicant in the remarks filed August 11, 2006, Watanabe (U.S. Pat. 5,448,988) fails to disclose the combination of elements as claimed including multiple thickness-varying steps within a

single layer. Although Watanabe does suggest that the tube could “employ a multilayer structure of various kinds of elastomer”, this does not explicitly teach or fairly suggest that a three layered laminate structure wherein the multiple thickness-varying steps occur within one of the layers.

Claims 24 and 30 have been amended to recite that at least one of the layers includes at least three regions and at least two boundary parts along its longitudinal direction and one of the regions is contiguous to the other region through one of the boundary parts, in which one of the regions is different from the other regions adjacent thereto in its physical property and/or chemical property, wherein each of the boundary parts is formed as a property-varying part within which the physical property and/or the chemical property of the layer gradually vary in its longitudinal direction (claim 24) or vary in a stepwise manner (claim 30). The claims as amended suggest multiple regions of varying physical and/or chemical property wherein the variations occurs either gradually or in a stepwise manner in at least one of the layers. As alluded to above with respect to claim 17, Watanabe fails to explicitly teach or fairly suggest multiple property varying regions within at least one of the layers, wherein the boundary parts vary either in a gradual or stepwise manner. Although other prior art of record show certain individual features in the claims, no single reference or proper combination of references suggest the claimed combinations of elements in its entirety.

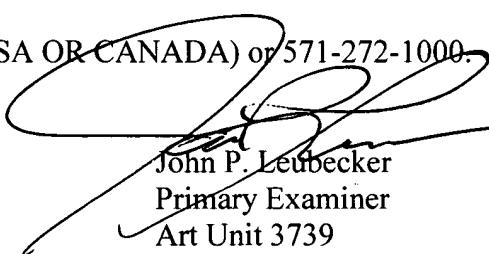
Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled “Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance.”

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to John P. Leubecker whose telephone number is (571) 272-4769. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Friday, 6:00 AM to 2:30 PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Linda C.M. Dvorak can be reached on (571) 272-4764. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated

information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.


John P. Leubecker
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 3739

jpl